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MEMORIES OF OXFORD

BY

JACQUES BARDOUX

Translated from the French by W. R. BARKER

With a Preface by MARGARET L. WOODS

LONDON
F. E. ROBINSON
20 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, BLOOMSBURY
1899

[*Sole authorised translation.*]

THE ORIGINAL OF THIS WORK
WAS DEDICATED TO M. BARDOUX,
THE AUTHOR'S FATHER, SENATOR
AND MAN OF LETTERS, WHO READ
IT A FEW DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH.

1-17-38

PREFACE

'To see ourselves as others see us' is an amusing gift, of the kind those tricksy moralists the fairies loved to bestow upon mortals; generally, it must be confessed, more to their discomfort than to their profit. But the fault lay with the egregious folly of the mortals; and have we not all felt how very wisely we ourselves would have used such opportunities? Now this English University of ours begins to be observed by certain 'others,' who see it with different eyes from our own. And since we need not go so far as Goblin Market for the gift in question, there is no reason why we should be cursed with too much peevishness or pride to profit by it. The inner life of Oxford the public school

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and University man knows as no other can. The details of its outer life, so elaborate, so bewildering to a stranger, are to him simple as the days of the week. The very Freshman, I am told, is now familiar with mysteries that were once revealed only to the fourth-year man. The whole complex system of the University appears to him so perfectly natural that he no more wonders at it, no more questions whence it came, than a bird considers the age and outline of the gnarled oak on whose branch it sings. The foreigner is in a very literal and valuable sense a Freshman. He brings fresh eyes to this great Gothic fabric of ours; he sees it from the outside, from a little distance, and so perceives certain general lines, certain dominant features, which to the dwellers within are unobservable. Formerly our foreign visitors were few and fleeting. It is only of late years that the spell of Oxford has fallen

on a world beyond the little orb of the English upper classes. Americans, indeed, we have long had with us, but they have been of a kind and from an intellectual atmosphere scarcely distinguishable from our own. Wandering children of ancient and remote civilizations have often, too, passed through the midst of us and out again into the East—swarthy, gleaming-eyed exotics, between whose souls and ours hangs, viewless and impenetrable, a veil of time and destiny. But only in the latter years of this century of movement, of intellectual curiosity, did our European neighbours discover Oxford. Once discovered, the æsthetic charm, the antiquarian interest of the place, draws them to it; and also the interest, perhaps not altogether so pleasant, of observing in what manner of workshop are manufactured the makers and governors of that colossal Empire which sometimes startles Europe and even ourselves.

It is no uncommon thing nowadays for a young Frenchman to spend a term or more at Oxford; but M. Bardoux is the first of such quasi-undergraduates to give us his impression of University life and teaching. The son of a well-known senator and literary man, he brought to Oxford hereditary culture and intelligence, and an acquaintance with what is socially and intellectually best in his own University of Paris. Of an age to mix on equal terms with undergraduates, while, after the manner of his countrymen, more mature in mind than his English contemporaries, he saw much that is here, yet passes unobserved before our too-accustomed eyes.

A generation ago a poet enshrined the distant beauty of the city in verse which has outlived it, and breathed into her pastoral landscape the soul of the Scholar Gypsy. But it is a commonplace that the life of the place has hitherto persistently

escaped the pen of the writer. Possibly there are too many facets to it. Possibly there is a difficulty in distinguishing between permanent and temporary elements. Certainly if a man is not of a misanthropic and fractious disposition, he will see it with the eyes of his particular set. If M. Bardoux had written an account of the University which was complete and beyond criticism, he would have achieved what no Englishman has ever been able to do. But to this he makes no pretence. He has given us his impressions. Such impressions are interesting to the merely curious; and if we can learn nothing from them, the fault must lie with the temper of our own minds.

MARGARET L. WOODS.

OXFORD,
January, 1899.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THESE notes, written in my twentieth year, are not pretentious. Eminent writers have analyzed the character of the English people, and studied conscientiously and minutely the organization of Oxford and Cambridge. I do not claim to add any new facts or any original remarks on these subjects. My aim is far more modest. I wish to analyze the impression produced on a young Frenchman by the life, studies, and ideas of Oxford students. If I have been able at the same time to sketch a few of the characteristics of contemporary

England, my wishes will have been realized. The only merit these pages claim in a marked degree is that of sincerity. I have striven to forget the prejudices of youth; to observe frankly and judge impartially.

MEMORIES OF OXFORD

PART I.

OXFORD. This simple word gives birth in the mind of a mature student to as many pictures and ideas as the names of Athens or of Smyrna in the excited imagination of a pupil of rhetoric.[1] Oxford. Quite a small town, without suburbs and without slums; in the heart of the country; a town of palaces and parks; a University, proud of its memories and its privileges, whose teachers had known how to solve the difficult problem of combining a robust training with a profound learning; a school where all that is best in the

political, intellectual, and artistic life of the youth of England is trained, where a stranger can study contemporary England, discover her qualities, discern her blemishes, and imbibe at the same time a series of valuable lessons. Such are the vague and floating ideas which the word Oxford evoked in my thoughts.

Yesterday evening I arrived. In the darkness I looked in vain for towers and cloisters. The cab took me through dull and ugly suburbs. The taverns overflowed with customers, and the long lines of the canal were lost to view in the gloom of night. It was a disillusion. This morning I eagerly opened my window. Before me the University galleries displayed their colonnades and symmetrical wings. At the two ends of the street I saw old walls and beautiful trees—the two colleges of Worcester and Balliol. In spite of the early hour, students in cap and gown were coming and going. The bad impressions

of the day before were effaced. My hosts had already seen about my lodgings, and I had only to give myself up to the enjoyment of their kindly efforts. It was too late to be formally admitted to Balliol, but in the meanwhile I can join the Balliol Tennis Club and the Union, the Students' Society, and I shall attend as many courses of lectures as I wish. I shall be able, then, with a slight stretch of the imagination, to regard myself actually as an 'Oxford man.'

Tuesday, April 30, 1895.—This morning I paid my first visit and attended my first lecture at Balliol.

How can I describe the astonishment of a French student, accustomed to the confined quarters of his *lycées*,[2] to their buildings scarcely worthy of a barracks or a hospital, at the sight of the first Oxford college he may enter? Balliol is not celebrated for its beauty, yet its old walls, pierced with Gothic windows, half

hidden beneath the ivy or creepers, its aged trees, its carefully tended turf, its groups of young men and women, who were quietly walking to and fro or sitting beneath the shade of its ancient beech-trees, gave Balliol an air of refinement and of happy tranquillity which went straight to my heart.

Mr. —— had given me permission to attend his lectures on the Politics of Aristotle. So I went and joined the group of students on the stone staircase which leads up to the hall. With their different gowns and their shaven faces they have a certain monastic stamp. This first impression is accentuated as I enter the hall: a roof vaulted in the Gothic style (a style which I shall often have occasion to mention), windows of stained glass, and at the end an organ. The professor spoke from a reading-desk. Was this not a chapel? When I raised

my head and saw those black cassocks and heard the squeaking of the quill pens, I could easily have imagined myself, without any great effort of the imagination, transported into the midst of the ecclesiastical University of the Middle Ages; but that the bright dresses of the young ladies grouped behind the professor recalled my imagination, which was both touched and charmed, to the reality.

Carefully preserved memorials of the olden times, peace and happiness imprinted on things and faces—these were the two characteristics which immediately and deeply impressed me.

I found them again at every step of my long examination of the marvels of Oxford. How can I describe them? I could not: I am not even capable of it. The cloister of New College, so chaste and graceful in its style; the imposing Hall of Christchurch; the library and the chapel of

Merton, as complete as they were in the twelfth century; the wonderful gardens, and the tower of Magdalen — all these pictures whirl before my dazzled eyes, while I am unable either to arrest or to depict them. These colleges are all built on the same plan. The thought which inspired their architects in other days, the thought which they have written for all time on pages of stone, ought to have its influence on the youth of our day, owing to its nobility and loftiness. And it is this:

Every college ought to be made up of a cloister, where dead students may rest— those who have fallen all too soon, or those who have fallen later, sometimes with glory, in the battle of life; of a hall, wherein all their memories are centred; of the chapel, where new-comers may receive that moral education which constituted the strength of their forefathers.

To divide the young men into little families attached to their abodes, bound together by common memories, guided by the examples that are afforded them, this is the idea on which the University rests—an idea which is enough to render it immortal.

Wednesday, May 1, 1895.—It is the feast of springtime. The students of Magdalen have met at the top of their tower, and, in accordance with ancient custom, have saluted the dawn with a joyful song. The song finished, they have thrown their caps and gowns into the street. Yet there is nothing to mark any change in the season, save the poor, who come and knock at the doors to wish one a happy spring, and ask for alms. The north wind is sharp and cold; the chill rain comes down in torrents.

I went to Christchurch to hear the lecture of a young fellow, Sir ——, on the

political writers from Locke to Burke. The smallness of the room was like that of our own lecture-rooms, but the presence of two or three young ladies as serious listeners, and even the professor's lecture, were sufficient to remind me that I was really at Oxford. Sir —— recited or read a conscientious essay; but the slowness of his speech and the absence of style rendered attention difficult.

I begin to fear that these two faults are general here. I was taken to the opening lecture of the Regius Professor of History. All the University world, the dons in cap and gown, and their wives, had met in the University Buildings, the headquarters of the various departments of the University. On the entry of the Vice-Chancellor, who was preceded by his bedels, and respectfully welcomed by the audience, Mr. —— began. He showed how backward historical studies were in England.

France and Germany were considerably in advance of Oxford in the history of the Middle Ages, of European politics, and even of Parliamentary institutions.

Thursday, May 2, 1895.—A few remarks on the lectures of Mr. —— on the Politics of Aristotle.

Oxford undergraduates make a deplorable audience; they either do not attend at all or attend badly. The ladies are alone, or nearly alone, in following attentively, and in taking notes. The undergraduates talk or dream; the serious part of the audience remains quite impassive. The coldness of such a public, whom no stroke of humour can unbend, whose looks betray neither interest nor curiosity, has its effect at last on the professor. His disjointed talk (I cannot truly call it eloquence) nearly always remains cold and colourless. The only thing to which the master seems to aspire

is to prove the genuine interest presented by a study of the Politics. Modern thought ought to know Aristotle, not to satisfy a simple literary or historical curiosity, but to draw practical lessons from it.

I took care not to miss the weekly meeting of the Union Society this evening —the Oxford 'Conférence Molé.'[8] The Paris and the Oxford society differ as much as the two Parliaments, which they both (the Union in particular) respectively imitate. The President was seated, like the Speaker of the House of Commons, in a Gothic chair, with the Treasurer and the Librarian on each side of him. Below him sat the Secretary, near a large table, on which were two boxes. The speakers lean on this table, and address the President as they speak. The following motion was under discussion: 'That, in the opinion of this House, the present predicament of Mr. Chamberlain and his

followers is a just Nemesis upon them for their behaviour in the past.' The motion was forcibly and cleverly supported by Mr. C——, a Balliol man, of an American, rather than an English, type. He has black eyes, is short and squarely built, and he is endowed with a certain facility of speech which makes one find his opponents all the tamer. The other orators scarcely deserved the name. Quietly, with their hands in their pockets, walking up and down, they delivered, without conviction, a little ill-framed monologue. I still seem to see the last speaker — quite a young man, fair and beardless—blushing like a child. Between each of his words he interposed two familiar interjections, which did not even raise a smile on the faces of his impassive companions.

Friday, May 3, 1895.—I woke to the sound of the bugle, and, quite astonished

at a music so little in keeping with a University, I made inquiries, and was told that it was the annual review of the Queen's Own Oxford Hussars, a regiment of volunteers forming an effective force of fifteen officers and seventy-five privates.

To-day the sun is working a transformation in Oxford. It restores the stones, blackened by the rains and battered by the winds, to their ancient colours. It blots out the eyesores, adds a finish to the buildings, and gives them richness and even youth. My friends have torn me away from my admiration of these sights to go and see a cricket-match in the University park.

Here are lawns stretching as far as one can see. On one side the river shining in the sun, and a horizon of tree-clad hills; on the other, white shapes played upon the grass, while high Gothic towers

which overshadowed the trees in the park scarcely hid the sun, as it fitfully cast its rays on a scene so full of gaiety and youth. These white forms running over the grass in the sunshine beneath the blue sky reminded one a little of the Greek athletes of old.

Saturday, May 4, 1895.—I am attending a new series of history lectures on the relations of the Church and State, that is to say, on the origins of the Anglican Church, at All Souls, a college built to the memory of those who died in the Hundred Years' War. All these lectures have the same character. They are much more like a serious and solid 'rhetoric' class than the lectures of a University. The professor expounds his subject tersely and intelligently, but there are always two things lacking, firstly, that clear and methodical enunciation of ideas which is indispensable in a teacher; secondly,

originality in thought, nicety in detail, and eloquence of speech, the characteristic of the higher forms of instruction. The lectures of Mr. —— afford an excellent example of my meaning. He is clear, exact, impartial, but he lacks originality and brilliancy.

Every Saturday the head of Somerville Hall—the most important of the three ladies' colleges—holds a reception, assisted by her pupils. From the moment of my entry my astonishment was only equalled by the surprise I had felt on first seeing one of the Oxford palaces; there was the same impression of happiness and comfort. No barrack-like *lycées*, no grated convent, but villas covered with creepers and separated by flower-decked lawns. Graceful young girls walked to and fro in the gardens. The modern ideal is to give to women an education as solid as that of young men, but, in order to counteract the masculine tendencies which such an

education might engender, to convert the college into a home as beautiful as it is happy. It seems to me that even if they have not attained such an ideal here, they have certainly come closer to it than in certain queer establishments in the Rue Saint André des Arts, or in the Rue du Rocher.[4]

The lady student who showed me over Somerville Hall hardly troubled to conceal the disdain my astonishment inspired. Here is the gymnasium with its parallel bars, its horse, and its bicycles; the drawing-room, plain but comfortable, and provided with pianos and violoncellos. As we went up a delightful staircase she asked me about the most famous French geometrician. I muttered the name of M. Poincaré, but acknowledged my ignorance. My guide's disdain became more marked. After showing me one or two rooms, regular nests, covered with rugs and hangings, strewn with pictures

and artistic objects, the student handed me over to the care of one of her friends, who hastened to speak to me about the chief manuscripts of the 'Chanson de Roland.'

I made my escape, sufficiently dumbfounded, but deeply interested by all I had seen. I begin to fear that the 'young person'[5] of Dickens has had her day, and that a new woman is in process of formation.

Sunday, May 5, 1895.—Sunday is rigorously observed by the undergraduates. To wear flannels or play tennis on this day would bring one into evil odour even at Balliol, the least austere of the colleges.

On Sunday evening in all the colleges the fellows and tutors meet at a dinner. Each of them can invite guests; so this evening I was permitted to take my place at Balliol high table, presided over by the master, Mr. Caird, a well-known philo-

sopher. On the floor of the hall undergraduates in their gowns talked in low voices; above their heads the last rays of light illuminated the stained windows. Was this not a banquet of Oxford clerks, which one attended as it were in a dream?

The impression faded away when the professors abandoned their gowns in the smoking-room. 'You must be very bored here; there is no Bullier,'[6] remarked one of my neighbours. I had the greatest trouble in demonstrating to him that this kind of establishment was chiefly dedicated to birds of passage. Truly the Latin Quarter ought to lose its popularity among foreigners. For how many coarse jokes, disagreeable confidences, and tactless questions is it responsible over here?

We left the smoking-room; the groups had dispersed; the evening was mild, and the old buildings were illumined with a

pleasant and melancholy light; occasional songs, or the far-off echo of some ballad broke the silence of the night. And it is in the midst of sights such as these that these young men pass four or five years. They ought, all of them, to be men of talent.

I left Balliol without being able to stifle a feeling of jealousy. On St. Giles's a little knot of people was collected. They were listening respectfully to a student who, surrounded by some friends in cap and gown, was expounding a passage of Scripture.

Monday, May 6, 1895.—While listening to the opening lecture of Mr. Dicey on Constitutional Law, I was, for the first time, impressed with the fact that I was listening to a man of eminence. His venerable appearance, the clearness of his lecture, the warmth of his convictions, and the youthful fervour with which he spoke of liberty, completely charmed me. I am

compelled to mention that there were scarcely ten students at the lecture of this remarkable man. This absence of intellectual curiosity has come as a painful surprise to me. This is the first reservation I find myself obliged to make. Shall I have many others to mention?

Tuesday, May 7, 1895.—The graveyards are among the most beautiful things in Oxford. Whether they lie at the foot of churches, in the centre of the town, or are enclosed within the college gates, they have the same characteristics. They are wisely kept in such a way as to respect their age without giving them an appearance of neglect. They give birth to feelings rather of melancholy than of sadness in the hearts of their visitors—of hope rather than discouragement. The trees which give them shade, the flowers which push their way up among the tombs, all tend to enliven them. It is a field dedicated to memory rather than to the dead.

I was able this afternoon to attend Congregation, that is to say, the meeting of the Upper House of the University.[7] The various University professors were gathered in their robes around an episcopal throne in a vast Gothic hall (one of the finest in Oxford), beautified with fourteenth-century glass, furnished with carved stalls like those in a chapter-house. The Vice-Chancellor entered in a scarlet gown, preceded by his six bedels, who cried in a loud voice, 'Magistri intretis in congregationem per fidem intretis,' and followed by two proctors in black robes edged with fur. The Vice-Chancellor sat down on the daïs, with his two proctors beneath him. Below them sat the bedels. To right and left were the doctors in robes of scarlet or scarlet and black. After the Vice-Chancellor had opened the meeting with the customary form of words—'Placetne vobis Domini doctores, placetne vobis magistri'—they

entered on a long discussion, which was lively but confused — Should Philosophy and Ethics be counted among the Sciences?[8] The proctors told the 'Ayes' and the 'Noes,' coming to each member of the audience in turn, and the Vice-Chancellor withdrew with as much ceremony as he had entered.

I left these ceremonies of the Middle Ages to rejoin the comfortable life of modern times, and to take tea with one of my new friends at Wadham College. A large room with curtains to the doors and windows, and soft rugs for the feet, lighted by beautiful pointed windows which afforded a view of the lawn in the garden, a bedroom and a dressing-room— such is the modest establishment of an Oxford undergraduate. I understand now how it is that the average allowance necessary to an Oxford man is as much as £200 a year. We talked with some animation, and some young men I did

not know immediately put to me three questions, which they nearly always put to a French new-comer: 'When will France declare war with Germany?' 'What is her position on the Egyptian question?' and 'What do you think of Zola?' This last question has a variant: 'Is the Latin Quarter always as lively as is supposed?' I shall avoid passing judgment at this early stage on these young men; but two things have already struck me, their shy reserve and their lofty pride. They are gentlemen who appreciate neither the hilarity nor the fascinations of Bohemia. While still in many respects children, they are not students; they are better than that.

Wednesday, May 8, 1895.—Yesterday I was entertained by undergraduates who lived in college; to-day some undergraduates, who were living in lodgings, offered me their hospitality. Their liberty is not complete; their landlords have to

afford certain guarantees of respectability, and to keep a register of the hours at which the students return every evening. I knocked, and the door was answered by an obliging and pretty servant, who led me to Mr. ——, whose establishment is as fine as that of a Wadham man.

The owner of the lodging spoke to me at length of Huysmans—Huysmans before his conversion—and of Catulle Mendès; those everlasting questions on the Latin Quarter followed. As soon as possible I gave a turn to the conversation. The social question suggested itself as a topic. My friends, who seemed very familiar with the subject, scarcely feared the invasion of German collectivism, although the absence of a small landowning class afforded them some anxiety. What they feared most was the advent of State Socialism, and, above all, of Christian Socialism.

That very evening I was to understand

the truth of this assertion. After attending an exciting cricket-match, which a number of old workmen came to watch—an enthusiastic public, I thought, who were glad enough to forget social inequalities before a fine stroke of the bat—I went to pass my evening at a meeting of the Guild of St. Matthew. A young Anglican priest was holding a discussion on Socialism. With a voice which was at first slow and monotonous, but which gradually became more animated, the speaker explained that the Church ought to make itself master of the social movement in order to utilize its advantages, and to anticipate its dangers. While he spoke to the students of the duties that belonged to them, of the effort they must make to realize this dream, I looked around me. In a small room, only half lit, were gathered some twenty persons—undergraduates and ladies. And it was to this little nucleus of the faithful that

the clergyman, with an animated face, with a voice that became gradually stronger and graver, showed the greatness and the beauty of Christian Socialism. Could one ever have expected to encounter such a spectacle beside the splendid Gothic palaces of Oxford?

Thursday, May 9, 1895.—The University of Oxford is, above all, a school of political sciences. This is due, first, to the large number of lectures on Constitutional Law and Political Economy; secondly, to the special care that its professors take to give instruction on social ethics. This very morning a lecturer said, in reference to Aristotle, that an honest man could not hold aloof from the strife of parties. 'Dante,' added he, 'has kept a place in his Inferno for such egoists.' Lastly, there is not one of that multitude of different societies, which have the Union for their model, which does not contribute towards a political education.

This evening the debate was dull. The motion, 'That in the interests of literature and morality this House would welcome a censorship of the press,' scarcely inspired the speakers. One of them, however, Mr. B——, of Worcester College, made me understand the nature of 'humour,' pleasantry without grace, but without coarseness; without subtlety, but without ill-nature, the pleasantry of a healthy, good-humoured boy.

Both physical and political education exist here; one can recognise their presence by certain infallible signs. I begin to suspect the existence of an ethical education, but I have not yet discovered the artistic education.

Saturday, May 11, 1895.—I have been to pay a visit to Mr. H——, a teacher of philosophy, and one of the leaders of the socialistic movement at Oxford. Curly red hair, which fell half over a broad and protruding forehead, and encircled a hard

and energetic face, made Mr. H—— look more like a German than an Englishman.

A firm believer in Socialism, this distinguished teacher thinks that England has everything to gain by this movement. The strikes of the workers in match-factories and of dockers have helped lately to extend the movement. The keen interest taken in the social question is shown in his opinion by the extraordinary success of the well-known pamphlet 'Merry England,' and by the circulation of the *Clarion*. To-day this violence has quieted down, and Socialism has entered into a Parliamentary stage. Besides, no one here ever thinks of wholesale Socialism, but of the Nationalization of the land and of State Socialism. Mr. H—— told me, as he bade me farewell, that the numerous Oxford Socialists were going to take an active part in the forthcoming elections.

Sunday, May 12, 1895. — I have just spent a most interesting evening. I have been to dine in the hall of All Souls. The students were too few (only graduates are admitted here), the hall was of too classic an architecture, the silver plate was too luxurious to enable me to believe for a minute that I was present at a banquet of 'Oxford clerks.' Only a few traditions remained. The Warden recited the 'grace' peculiar to the college, and at the end of the banquet drank a silent toast to each of the guests. An Oxford college without traces of the past would be a contradiction in terms.

On the right of Sir William Anson, the well-known Warden of All Souls, was a person in a B.A.[9] gown, whom everyone treated with the deepest respect. The gown and the kind and refined expression of his face made me take him for a distinguished M.P. It was General Roberts, who had come to Oxford to preside at

the annual meeting of the members of Oxford House, one of the most famous University settlements in the suburbs of London. My neighbour, Mr. Dicey, diverted my mind from the astonishment I felt at seeing a General in a Bachelor's gown, coming to preside at the annual meeting of a philanthropic undertaking, by speaking to me with fervour of the School of Political Science. Its founder, M. Boutmy, and some of its professors, M. Sorel among others, enjoy a very real popularity here. Mr. Dicey had been present at a historical discussion between M. Sorel and one of his pupils, and was compelled to acknowledge, with regret, that nothing of the kind was possible at Oxford.

The evening which followed this elegant dinner will remain engraved in my memory as one of the noblest sights at which I have ever been present.

In the marvellous hall of New College,

with its carved panels lighted by ancient lamps, which gave an appearance of life to the portraits of the celebrated men which were hanging here and there on the wall—in this hall, pierced with Gothic windows, through which one saw domes and turrets rising into the blue sky, were crowded some thousand young men. The Bishop of St. Albans made the first speech. He described with enthusiasm and gratitude the marvellous results obtained by the students' settlements. When he mentioned that the number of communicants had doubled, there was a round of enthusiastic applause. General Roberts got up next, and met with a tremendous welcome. He was happy, he said, to revisit the Oxford where he had passed his youth,[10] and of which he preserved an eternal memory. He had visited the University settlements, and had been deeply touched; and he thought it right to express to the younger generation his

sincere admiration. In the army they were striving to follow their example. Clubs had been established where the soldiers could read and write. The great success of the evening was reserved for the secretary of Oxford House, the Rev. Winnington Ingram. With a real talent he showed what the students and the workpeople could gain by being put in contact. He described with skill and feeling all the good that had been done, and he concluded with a fine burst of eloquence, in which he exclaimed: 'And you who have lately come to the University, come to us; we have need of you, and you have need of our workers. Whoever you may be, orators, philosophers, or poets, come. We shall always know how to make use of you: all of you come. Let us strive together to give a little more glory to the blue flag of our University.'

While the hall resounded with applause

I retired, sad and touched. I thought of certain undertakings at Paris which are organized by students and supported with difficulty, while no one ever gives them a word of encouragement.[11] I recollected the efforts made by some friends of mine to establish a more important undertaking, and their failure before the general indifference. When one visits foreign countries there are some superiorities which one can recognise without emotion, as, for instance, superiority in commerce, industry, and political institutions; but moral superiorities can never be recognised without a certain pang. Can it be that the passion for ideals in France is slumbering?

Monday, May 13, 1895. — My life is become that of an undergraduate, and the way I pass my day is based on theirs. After breakfast, about ten o'clock, I go to lecture. I come back for lunch about half-past twelve; I change, and go and

play at tennis, or row on the river. About five, after tea, I work for an hour or two; then I dress for dinner, and I often spend the rest of my evening at Balliol.

On ordinary occasions, when there are no examinations, this is the day's work of the undergraduate; it comprises in all four hours' reading. It is a general rule, subject, I admit, to many exceptions. One can divide undergraduates, I think, into three classes. The 'unvirtuous' are given up almost entirely to sports. They are generally deeply ignorant, and were not this ignorance redeemed by youthful spirits and gaiety, one would soon be tired of their society. This melancholy but widespread specimen of the English youth flourishes chiefly at the rich colleges, such as New College and Magdalen.[12] The 'virtuous' or 'dull' people work more than many French students; they are generally students of moderate means,

nearly always the sons of clergymen, and themselves destined to Holy Orders. If they do not allow their virtues to be forgotten in their gaiety, they are exposed to trifling practical jokes. The popular class find time in the day for five or six hours' work. It is among the popular class that the distinguished pupils of Oxford are recruited, the candidates for the Home Civil or the Indian Civil, the future Fellows, and, above all, the politicians, the pick of the pick. Poor colleges such as Wadham, Brasenose, and Balliol (especially Balliol), provide the greater part of this aristocracy of talent.

The young men who belong to this little body are very pleasing to me. They have a general information on all subjects rather than a particular acquaintance with any one; less mature than our French students, they have read less and observed less. But this youthfulness of intellect is compensated for by youthfulness of

heart; if they have fewer ideas, they have more passions and more enthusiasms; if they are less prepared to meet objections, they have by way of compensation more convictions. Being creatures rather of will than of intelligence, they believe in their religion, or totally deny it. The doubts that arise from indifference and scepticism are unknown to them. Scepticism has no effect here either on daily life, or on the life of the mind, or, above all, on the life of the heart. They are more watched over than we are, and their conduct is stricter; if they are guilty of an escapade, they do not boast of it. Jests are permitted, but ribaldry is unknown. They do not worship woman, but they respect her. There is no intellectual élite so strong as ours, but they undoubtedly have a political élite, and a much rarer thing, a moral élite.

Could we pronounce the same panegyric on our French students of the present

day? Certainly not; and if a change is coming about, they will certainly owe it to themselves alone; for nothing in the examples they have received, in the books that they have read, or in the lessons that have been given them, have made them understand the necessity of it.

Tuesday, May 14, 1895. — How truly English is the scenery on the Isis! Young people read or sleep on its banks; further off young girls, daughters of dons, are preparing the classic tea. Every moment one passes some boats; sometimes a Canadian canoe, which flies by like the wind; sometimes a slimly-built craft, manned by undergraduates, who wear their college arms on their blazers and hats. All these essentially English scenes take place amidst the most purely English surroundings that it is possible to conceive. A double row of trees, which let their laden branches sink into the river; on the banks rich pasturage on which huge

sheep rest. The thick water glides through a network of long and supple plants, and is sometimes hidden beneath them as by a carpet of verdure. And over all this scene, where life is prolonged by the moisture, hangs a bluish mist; it comes closer and closer every moment, like those clouds which leave the mountains in the evening to envelop the plains.

Wednesday, May 15, 1895.—Professor —— began his course to-day. With the peculiar care that Oxford teachers take to give a practical application to their general ideas, he had taken for his subject 'The Principles of International Law in Connection with the War between China and Japan.' In the hall of All Souls, before an audience composed of professors and ladies, and naturally not represented by a single student, he read a very argumentative composition. The complete suppression of discussion gives a certain monotony and obscurity to the lecture; the vital points

do not stand out, and no change in tone serves to wake the slumbering audience.

I spent my evening at Christchurch; my host took me to the cathedral to Vespers. Five or six of us met in the oldest of the chapels in the aisles. An altar without a single ornament other than a Bible and two candles; chairs and pews in carved wood; on the floor instead of flags monumental tablets, under which sleep the Fellows of bygone times. Candles shed a dim light over the church, pillars stood out here and there, and the ornaments shone in the dusk. Amidst this grand and simple decoration, amidst the silence and darkness, the voice of the Dean of Christchurch rose above the bent heads, while the bell slowly rang, reminding the students that the hour for prayer had come.

Thursday, May 16, 1895.—I have succeeded in dragging from a Professor of History, Mr. F——, some interesting con-

fessions. As the masters do not give to the students any historical system, the young men who are intending to teach are obliged to go to Germany, or to the École des Chartes,[13] to perfect themselves. There is nothing here, according to him, which has the most distant resemblance to an education in teaching. The difficulties with which all proposals for reform are surrounded, the opposition they encounter in congregation, make their adoption very difficult. It is on this account that one cannot establish in history a school of Records, in literature a school of English literature.[14] This is a fine confession to remember: there are no general systems in Oxford teaching, the necessary and primary condition of every ntellectual education.

This evening at the Union they discussed the collectivist ideas as expounded in 'Merry England.' The Socialistic clan were mustered in full force. They de-

fended their cause with stubbornness, but without talent. The champions of society were quite mediocre. One of them compared Socialism at length to a prospectus of a third-rate commercial house. The other criticised a form of society in which one could not play cricket. Nothing serious had been said, when a Frenchman, one of the most brilliant undergraduates in the University, and one of the most popular at the Union, M. Belloc, began to speak. With vivid eloquence he attacked the idea of a society founded on a narrow materialism from which the idea of liberty was excluded. The evening was a triumph for French thought, resplendent with ideas and genius.

Saturday, May 18, 1895.—This evening one of my friends took me to the Brackenbury, one of the three Balliol clubs, the only one to which strangers are admitted. Debating societies have two advantages: they force young men to form convictions,

and they accustom them at an early age to social intercourse.

The Brackenbury consists of thirty members, who entertain it and read papers at its meetings in turn. The essay which H—— read to us this evening was entitled 'The Faults of Our Age.' He endeavoured to show that everything to-day in the domain of politics, as well as in that of literature, proved that social questions were the only subjects with which one ought to be interested. It is in the study of these problems that one must seek those social ideals which are necessary to every useful and intelligent life. But it is impossible to conceive of social ideas unless one has faith in the possibility of human perfection, and in Evolution. Evolution and Socialism, these are the two master ideas of the age. A failure to understand them will turn the societies of Europe adrift. This doctrine, which was expounded with clearness and in-

telligence, raised a lively discussion. After a vote of thanks had been accorded to H——, with as much gravity as one would expect in a public meeting, the discussion was adjourned.

Sunday, May 19, 1895.—The conversation this evening has been more interesting than it usually is. My friends violently attacked the French University. Their chief reproach against it was, that it did not provide an education. 'We,' they said, 'leave Oxford citizens and gentlemen.' I tried to answer; my arguments were naturally found to be inadequate. And I hastened to open a discussion on French literature.

I wished to arrive at the authors they appreciated. They are better acquainted with the seventeenth than the nineteenth century. As for the eighteenth, it is almost completely ignored. Voltaire and Rousseau are only appreciated by the fastidious; one is too sceptical, the other

too ideal, for English tastes. Among our nineteenth-century poets contemporaries are almost disregarded, save in some quarters Verlaine. Of our four great romanticists Vigny and Musset are not known; Lamartine is regarded as tiresome and stale; Victor Hugo is regarded as a genius of the first order. Our historians are little read, save by specialists. As for our novelists, they must be divided into two classes. The first class are regarded in the light of bad books, and read as such among a select few: I will not name them. The rest are relished and appreciated—Flaubert more than Balzac. With a rare sense of justice they admire Alphonse Daudet more than any other modern French author. Victor Hugo and Daudet are, for Oxford students, the two great names in French literature since 1850.

About nine o'clock we went to the hall filled with ladies, most of them young,

who had come to listen to the weekly concert given by Balliol. At the end of he concert everybody got up, students and guests forming a huge choir in which the fresh voices of girls joined with the grave voices of professors, and thundered out the following hymn :

'Praise the Lord ! ye heavens, adore Him ;
Praise Him, angels, in the height ;
Sun and moon, rejoice before Him ;
Praise Him, all ye stars and light.'

What an environment, and how full is this education of moral force and exaltation ! The poor French youth at the age when a man's character is formed, have nothing of all this. On Sundays they have no choirs in which their voices may mingle with those of their sisters in the praise of God ; on week-days they have no parks planted with flowers and trees, none of these old palaces, the sight of which exalts the soul no less by their

beauty than by the memories which they recall. And yet not a few of them have known how to preserve nobility of heart and loftiness of thought. Many poets and many artists have lived in the garrets of the Quartier Latin. Here, from these beautiful buildings, there have gone forth, I admit, great statesmen, but only one artist, Burne-Jones, and three poets, Shelley, Swinburne, and Matthew Arnold. Why should we despair of our race's vitality?

Monday, May 20, 1895.—The librarian of the Union gave an interesting breakfast this morning. An American student of Harvard bore all the burden of the conversation. The middle classes, he told us, do not exist in the United States, so class animosities are violent there; the only way of quieting them, he thought, would be the nationalization of landed property. The conversation at this point took a turn, and University topics were discussed.

While the two students, the American and the English, were talking, I was watching them with curiosity. These two peoples, drawn from the same sources, have lost all their original resemblances. Of the two young men, one was expressing himself with facility, and was revealing the rapidity of his intellect; the other, one of the best Union speakers, spoke badly, but redeemed the slowness of his speech by the profundity of his remarks. The one was nervous, showed himself capable of irreflective enthusiasm, and revealed all his thoughts; the other was master of himself, and only said exactly what he wanted to say. The one seemed to attach to ideas an interest independent of their practical consequences; the other preferred facts to ideas. The narrow mould of the Saxon thought had been shattered, and the breath of European ideas—I was going to say of French ideas—had passed over him. I withdrew with

the American student. 'We do not forget,' he said, 'that you have helped us to establish our independence.' He said that in his country all minds were impregnated with French literature, and he added, 'Oxford is the University; Paris is the city.'

Tuesday, May 21, 1895.—I have substituted some lectures on Ethics for one of my numerous series of lectures on Political Economy. I fear I am not very regular, for one breathes here an atmosphere of profound boredom. The professor's method does not lack originality. He elaborates without the least aptitude for elocution a printed syllabus. I have it before me now. The different systems are put down in their historical order, and refuted with arguments, which are, in the same way, classified by their date. It is not a lesson in ethics, but a course of philosophical history denuded of every interest.

Wednesday, May 22, 1895.—I have now been attending for several days the lectures of Mr. Caird on Plato. He expresses himself with facility, argues cogently, and criticises warmly. The Master of Balliol is endowed with three qualities, which are rarely found together in the same man. He is a philosopher, a man of letters, and an orator. My neighbours are deeply conscious of the value of Mr. Caird, but their admiration does not extend to Plato.

That a young ladies' college should open its doors to a socialistic meeting is certainly a circumstance calculated to astonish me, if I still possessed a faculty for astonishment. The hall of Somerville was transformed. High up in the gallery the lady students had taken their places; merry and happy, they exchanged pleasantries with those of their friends who were doing the honours of the place. The undergraduates were more serious and were gathered on the floor of the

hall round the platform. It was a very curious meeting, owing to the place where it was held, the number of the ladies among the audience, as well as for the peculiar physiognomy of the Fabians.

After a clever introduction on the part of the president, the speaker, a young clergyman, got up to make his speech. He spoke like a visionary, and his discourse was sadly comical. He invited the feminine part of the audience to be contented with one dress, the masculine part to give up smoking. He compared the social question to two glasses of water, one full and the other empty. If one wished to fill the first, one must naturally empty the other. The clergyman ended his speech by the following maxim of an indulgent system of ethics: 'To be good one must be happy.' Through the open windows one heard bells pealing. A small, ugly lady and a beautiful young girl, tall and fair, got up in turn, and

expatiated on the charms of the speaker and of Socialism. The bells were ringing all the time, but no one listened to them.

Thursday, May 23, 1895.—To-day is the first day of the celebrated Eights week, the graceful festival of the religion of sport. The towers of the city hoist their colours, a red cross on a white ground; the buildings of the University their flag, a red cross on a blue ground; the colleges their various arms. They rustle gaily in the wind, while a well-dressed crowd passes through the courts and the generally silent cloisters of Christchurch, and gather in crowds on their respective college barges, which are decked in their brightest colours. A gun is fired, and they are off. One hears in the distance the cries of men; one sees through the trees white forms running. Now the long line of boats is almost completely visible in line with the runners. Swiftly the crews pass in front of the barges, some of them dressed in

white and blue, others in pink, and others in scarlet. On the other side of the river the surge of runners rolls along—workmen, professors, and undergraduates pell-mell, saluting the boats with pistol-shots and enthusiastic cries. And over all, above this youthful excitement, picture to yourself the beautiful light of a summer's day. This method of apprehending the general competition lacks neither elegance nor fascination nor beauty.

This evening at the Union took place the great annual debate; that at which the mothers, the sisters, and, one must add, the *fiancées* are present. The *fiancée*, that pleasant phantom which passes to and fro in the imagination of the English student; a surer guardian of his morality than the University police; which preserves all the sensibility of his heart and all the freshness of his youth. The hall was beautiful, the students somewhat absent-minded, the speakers more weighty

than ever. The subject of the debate, 'That this House would welcome the Admission of Women to University Degrees,' had a certain flavour of feminine charm. J. A. Simon was the only one to notice it. He strove to express it, and his discourse was full of a fine and delicate wit. Towards eleven o'clock the President took us away to celebrate the beginning of the great week. After some allusion to the ladies, the conversation fell within the domain of politics, a subject they do not forget there even during Eights week. At the age of twenty in France we have feelings in politics and opinions in literature; here they have opinions in politics and feelings in literature.

Friday, May 24, 1895.—A fashionable piece called 'Patience' was performed at the little Oxford theatre this evening. Take a little Palais Royale, some Cluny, and flavour the mixture with the music of

the Opéra Comique, and you will have 'Patience.' The author wished to ridicule the two contemporary schools of English poets—the vegetarians, who affect shapeless coats and disordered hair; the fleshly, or fleshless, school; and the idyllic, who love the verdure of the woods and romantic assignations in the shade. To his satires on the vanity of poets, on women who are passionately in love with their pretensions, the author has added a chorus of soldiers, wild dances, and sentimental romances. The scenes follow each other without any apparent reason amidst a whirlwind of ridiculous ideas which are unfolded before the amazed spectators.

Saturday, May 25, 1895.—Two hours at lecture, two garden-parties, the races, a concert, a wine—this is a true student's diary during the Eights week.

All these festivals are like each other. One seldom finds in them the ease of manner or the animation which distinguish

French festivities; but they all lead one to forget their failings, owing to the frame in which they are set.

To-day at Corpus one might have imagined one's self in front of a stage scene, so carefully had everything been arranged, so much did each particular add to the general beauty of the view. Between the two sombre and sad buildings is a lawn, on which the ladies walk in their white dresses; further on are old ramparts, the ruins of which are hidden by the ivy; further still the great Christchurch meadows, with their flocks of cattle and avenues of venerable trees, through which one can see the reflection of the river, and far away on the horizon, at a distance which makes them resemble the sea, the surge of the wooded hills.

My friends gave this evening at Balliol a concert to their families. At the conclusion of the songs they went up to their rooms and still sang on. Nothing in their

songs resembled the national airs of the Quartier Latin. The national airs of Oxford are better than the verses of Bruant. They were the 'Hundred Pipers,' the song the Highlanders sang at Waterloo during the charge of our Cuirassiers; 'Mandalay,' a favourite with the Indian troops, and a delightful ballad of 'Oh, my honey!' And the echo of the old walls sent back the refrain of the songs across the old, silent courts. I left them, as I leave them always, moved and charmed; a little jealous, however, of the care their forefathers took to surround their youth with things noble and beautiful. Ours did not spoil us in the same way.

Monday, May 27, 1895. — After the concert this evening at University College the guests dispersed into the garden. In a corner of the quadrangle is a dark gate I went in and descended several steps. Behind me I heard laughing and talking;

the pink or green lamps were swinging gaily. I went still further down and everything disappeared. Soon I see resting on a black pedestal a form so white that it seemed to shine in the night. As I come nearer I can make out, thanks to the reflection of the light, a fine face, half veiled by long tresses of hair; a muse raises above its head the palm of immortality; on the pedestal, in letters of gold, was a name—Shelley.

I turned to ascend the steps again. At the top of the staircase, full in the light, a young man and a girl had stopped hand in hand in silence. They had come, without doubt, to pay their homage to the greatest of English poets. This homage ought to make his spirit smile gently from above.

Tuesday, May 28, 1895.—What do the undergraduates think of France? To give an exact answer one must divide them into two groups. The intellectual

minority, who are interested in foreign literature, and Liberals advanced in politics, are avowedly our friends. I have heard them deplore bitterly their foreign policy since 1860; heard them acknowledge that we had a right to claim the evacuation of Egypt, announce again and again that the best possible alliance for England would be an understanding with France. I said an understanding; they would not venture to propose, even in Parliament, a formal treaty of alliance. Public opinion cannot make up its mind to abandon an old idea that was dear to Pitt, that of England shut up in her island looking down with disdain from the heights of the cliffs of Dover on little Europe. As for the great Conservative body of students, that which finds its recruits among lovers of sport, and also among a considerable circle whose dignity does not avail to mask the ignorance and brutality of their manners, among these France is not

loved. Their vague historical ideas make them suppose that she is a dangerous rival in the field of commercial and Colonial expansion. Although they read but little, they have glanced over our papers often enough to be wounded in their hypocrisy by our affectation of cynicism, and to be bruised in their self-love by our pleasantries. One of them actually said to me the other day with becoming gravity, 'How can we ever be friends with the French? Why, you are always laughing at the size of our women's feet.' I said they do not love France, yet they do not hate her. Their anger is more like the sentiment that the language of Gavroche[15] would excite in a worthy and respectable English magistrate. Besides, a fear begins to creep over some of them, a fear of that Germany, for which in the presence of the French they affected a profound sympathy, but which at the bottom of their hearts they regard as a savage and coarse nation,

with a genius for warfare. It is only a beginning, but it is, perhaps, the first sign of the greatest event of the next century, an event which may be of singular service to us if the pilots of the Quai d'Orsay know how to guide our bark aright.

Wednesday, May 29, 1895.—To-day is the last day of the Eights, and it fell to my lot to join the various groups which run along the banks by the side of the various crews. The boats leave their moorings, the rowers bend to their work. Someone counts the seconds in a loud voice by the side of each boat, five, two, and so on. A tremendous noise arises from each bank, the runners start, and the boats shoot out. The enthusiasm around me is extraordinary. A professor whose hair is streaked with gray, yet still wears his old rowing blazer, runs like a schoolboy. The shouting and the firing of the pistols is deafening. We run all

the time. Here we are at the bend in the river Isis; it rolls along like a shining ribbon. Above the line of the boats are the barges covered with flowers and flags, where women and young girls are waving their handkerchiefs; the towers of Magdalen and the woods of Christchurch dominate the whole view. The Magdalen boat is victorious. From the top of the Magdalen barge, and from the opposite bank, arises a hideous hullabulloo. All at once, according to time-honoured custom, the two groups, those on the bank and those on the barge, fling themselves into the water, shouting and splashing. It was the healthy bacchanal of vigorous bodies.

The revels of the evening do not deserve the same praise. After a champagne dinner, each college lights a bonfire. Sometimes, when materials fail, furniture and doors are burnt. Sometimes they put on the top an unpopular student.

This year nothing of this character occurred. However, numbers of students must have been brought home in wheelbarrows, and at Hertford furniture to the value of £114 was burnt. They contented themselves with that. About ten o'clock the sky was illuminated with red lights, which cast on the old walls reflections as of fire, while the breeze every now and then brought the echo of the chorus of songs, which were bawled out like the songs soldiers sing on the evening of the capture of a town.

PART II.

Thursday, May 30, 1895.—I have often said that I have found a very marked ecclesiastical element in the University of Oxford. New facts help every day to confirm my first impression. In accordance with the law of James I., the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge exercise the patronage of all the parishes of which the patrons are, or become, Roman Catholic. Again, up to 1869 the candidates admitted to the B.A. and M.A. degrees had to sign a declaration before receiving their degrees that they accepted the Thirty-nine Articles.

To-day was the Romanes lecture. A fairly thick crowd, in which the feminine

element formed the majority, and including only two or three undergraduates (a fact I am obliged to mention whenever a literary question arises), crowded to the Sheldonian to listen to the celebrated pre-Raphaelite, Mr. Holman Hunt. His fine face, with its long white beard, and lighted up by two blue eyes, at once attracted his audience. He wished to show, he told us, that it was a duty of the University to develop artistic tastes among young men who are destined sooner or later by their social position to speak of works of art. The establishment of such a system would prevent young men from going in search of absolutely false ideas of art at Paris. Mr. Hunt then made a violent attack on French art.[16] 'Yet I will not hesitate to avow,' he said, 'the belief that, *on the whole*, French art has done great harm to the world; that what it produces *of late days* is *often* the antichrist of art, being not an

emanation from love, but from hate. . . . False sentiment, triviality of purpose, and negation of elevated thought and beauty, *and even more blamable defects*, have become their gospel to follow and to preach.' Mr. Holman Hunt ended his treatise by mentioning our sculpture of the obscene and our passion for blood. His audience was overjoyed.

Friday, May 31, 1895.—The thesis upheld by Mr. Holman Hunt has gained for me an interesting conversation with one of the only two Oxford students whom I have ever known to be interested in matters artistic. H—— had visited the Luxembourg; the harmony of the colours had struck him as much as the absence of ideas. The subjects were so clear that one only had to glance at a picture to understand the whole thought of the painter. The first thing of which the artist ought to think, said H——, was the idea. If in order to understand it, or

even to guess at it, the spectator was obliged to reflect and reason, the picture deserved every praise. I did not even try to discuss the question. In many of our conversations it happens that we stop in this way and abandon all hopes of reconciling our ideas. Even at the present time, when the distances between nations are blotted out, in spite of the identity of our civilizations, of our religious beliefs, and our literary educations, the differences between races still exist more clearly defined than the frontier lines that bound them.

This evening 'All Abroad,' a horrible musical and literary concoction, was performed. The applause from the pit which welcomed the speech of one of the characters, 'As for the rest of us Frenchmen, we are swept by the English from all quarters of the globe,' caused me neither surprise nor emotion, yet I could not preserve my calmness when I was expected to tolerate twice over

the quadrille of the Moulin Rouge. The cancan danced fifty yards from the Gothic palaces of Oxford was an abomination.

Saturday, June 1, 1895. — Thanks to an apparently insignificant event (a student had emptied the contents of a pitcher on the head of a bulldog), I was enabled to obtain an explanation as to the organization of the University police, whose duty it is to look after the undergraduates. Not only are the undergraduates forbidden to depart from the town unless they declare where they are going; not only in the colleges, as in private lodgings, is the hour at which they come in, and the number of visitors whom they receive between ten o'clock and midnight, registered; but they have a police and a court. Two dons, who are called proctors, are entrusted in turn with the task of looking after the town. Every evening one of them, accompanied by three bulldogs (police agents in plain clothes), parade the streets, while

three other bulldogs visit the bars. Every student who after a certain hour walks about without his cap and gown, goes to a tavern, or indulges in the slightest suspicious conversation, is reported to the proctors, sometimes by the bulldogs, sometimes by the 'townies.' He is fined, sent down for a term, or altogether, according to the gravity of his offence. As for the women, in the case of girls of the better class their families are delicately cautioned as to their behaviour; the more abandoned are brought before the Vice-Chancellor's Court and condemned to fifteen days' imprisonment, or are driven from the town. This discipline, of which the theory is more severe than the exercise, protects the timid, but does not deter the audacious. The timid, however, form more than half the Oxford students. These facts are more eloquent and more instructive than any possible commentary.

Monday, June 3, 1895. — On Whit-Monday the London workmen make an excursion to Oxford. The members of the various University settlements, students and dons, meet them, guide them through Oxford, and, by way of winding up the day, invite them in small bodies to tea.

One of my Balliol friends made me come to one of these gatherings. The guests of A—— were four, and all belonged to Toynbee Hall. For the first time I found myself in the presence of the true Anglo-Saxon, with his natural qualities and natural faults unaffected either by a deep literary education or by the influence of foreign civilization. What a distance between France and England is revealed in their workmen! The Englishman, heavy but energetic, slow but conscientious, not easy to impress with fresh ideas, but never liable to violent attacks of passion, labours at long and

monotonous tasks without discouragement, but without being capable of the least originality in their execution. The other makes up for his lack of endurance by his aptitude; the quickness of his intelligence is as astonishing as it is superficial. His imagination is open to receive all ideas, good and bad, and he makes up for the small results of his work by the rapidity and artistic skill with which he executes it.

While they were talking or singing, I saw across the blue smoke of the cigarettes my friends seated by the side of the workmen. One was explaining his trade as a carpenter, another his mistrusts in regard to Socialism. At the same hour in nearly every college in Oxford, at Eton, at Harrow, there were a multitude of these little brotherly repasts. This evening in many cottages the mother and the children will hear their father speak of the young men of Oxford; more than one grateful

thought will wing its way to their luxurious homes; this evening more than one social hate will be appeased.

The French, instead of regarding England as a country in which there is no fear of Socialism, instead of investing their capital there—the ultimate form that admiration takes in our disinterested age—would do better to remember that nations are not more subject to the laws of fate than individuals, and that if they avoid social trouble, it is because they have had sufficient intelligence to foresee and sympathy to understand.

Tuesday, June 4, 1895.—Just as by the side of the men's colleges there are ladies' colleges, so by the side of the public schools for boys there are public schools for girls, with the same organization, the same programmes, the same games. If the girls have no fags like the boys, yet they elect prefects, whose duty it is to organize the cricket, tennis, and golf, and

to maintain order in games and silence during studies. This resemblance between the two systems produces the most curious effects. In that equal strife on the same territory the fair sex triumphs everywhere. The other day at Cambridge two young girls beat their rivals in the domain of Political Science. They had already been beaten the year before in Mathematics. At the Royal Academy the lady students of the fine arts are much more numerous than the men. Our poor brothers on the other side of the Channel hold the first place in sport as yet.

Wednesday, June 5, 1895. — I had regularly attended lectures on history, political economy, constitutional law, and philosophy. I had one blank to fill up. I have done that to-day by attending two lectures, one for the translation of Greek authors, the other of Latin. I must tell you that there are no lectures here on the history of ancient literature.

Although the lectures were conducted by two men of unequal worth, they each resembled the other very closely. Virgil and Sophocles were studied with admiration and feeling, but without reverential respect. The professors allowed themselves the luxury of a smile or of criticism. Such is the spirit of their lectures. As for the method, it consists in an attempt to express the idea completely rather than to pay attention to details. The professor translates loosely, without reading the text, sometimes even without respecting the order of the words. This translation is scrupulously prepared in advance, and the professor limits himself sometimes to reading the notes so prepared. Comment on the authors from the point of view of grammar and the study of manuscripts is confined to the narrowest limits, and if it is necessary to throw light on a passage, illustrations are readily taken from English literature. In one word, these are lectures

for literary students, not for grammarians; they are superior to an ordinary rhetoric class, but they are inferior to the lessons of the Sorbonne.[17]

Sunday, June 9, 1895.—I went to one of the services held every Sunday evening in the open air by some undergraduates and clergy. The long avenue of trees in St. Giles's, which were vaguely outlined in the darkness, the walls of St. John's and of Balliol, the intermittent light which fell from a cloudy sky, the body of men praying, and all the surroundings removed us far away from our age and our habits. A student, with the anæmic figure of an apostle, spoke of that liberty which constitutes the supreme happiness of the Christian, who knows how to detach his soul from the bonds which confine it to earth and prevent it from raising itself to God. The second speaker, with long fair hair that covered a vigorous head, with clearly-cut robust features, impressed

me very much. His voice resounded through St. Giles's, and the walls sent back a dull, muffled echo of his words. He enlightened his commentary on the Bible by metaphors borrowed from the things which surrounded him. It was thus that he described the light that God casts on those He loves—a light more dazzling and purer than that of the star-studded heavens above our heads. After having sung a psalm, which was taken up by the spectators, the clergyman uncovered; everyone followed his example, and, turning towards a corner of the sky which was free from clouds and radiant with stars, he addressed to God an eloquent prayer, which came spontaneously from the heart of a true believer.

Tuesday, June 11, 1895.—I was present this morning at the written B.A. examination. The candidates, male and female, have not to treat a general subject, but to select a certain number from a series of

questions. Last year the candidates had to attend the examination in a white tie, dress-suit, and cap and gown. They have abandoned the dress-suit, but they have preserved the sacred tradition of the white tie and the gown. Light coats, as well as 'pumps' (little shoes), from which the undergraduate is as inseparable as from his whisky, are forbidden. The sumptuary laws annoy the undergraduates all the more because the lady students attend the examination in bright dresses and shoes. They actually wish to forbid them these liberties, and to adorn them with the white tie. This is certainly an anti-feminine movement I should never have expected.

Wednesday, June 12, 1895.—Mr. Max Müller gave his annual lecture to-day in the museum, that souvenir of the last pre-Raphaelite battles built on the designs of Ruskin in the Gothic style of Northern Italy. I shall not venture to criticise a

building which its architects thought would revive English art.

When the illustrious professor arrived, there were present exactly twenty-five persons, of whom nineteen were ladies; six others were professors or strangers; there was not a single undergraduate present.

The lesson was far from being devoid of interest. I must tell you that Mr. Max Müller has abandoned philology in order to devote himself to the study of comparative religions. The subject of his discourse was a résumé of the sacred books of the Hindus, preceded by some general reflections, and followed by a description of Kutho-Daw, an immense temple in Burmah, made up of a collection of 700 little chapels, each containing a marble ball, on which is engraved part of the sacred books. On leaving the museum, I met a crowd of students, who were coming from the University parks; they

had gone to watch a sensational cricket match.

Thursday, June 13, 1895.—We do not know England. We look on the English as fierce individualists, although they perform their social duties better than any other people. We refer to them as perfect democrats, when the differences between classes are reflected even in the language they speak. We are ready enough to think that they are wholly given up to their commerce, and that they are profoundly devoted to peace; it is yet another mistake. Young men often talk of increasing their army and their navy; war is frequently mentioned in their conversation and their speeches at the Union. I have heard mature men, University dons, speak of establishing compulsory military service, and affirming that a war is absolutely indispensable if England is to be drawn from the pacific sluggishness in which she is immersed.

These threats have surprised without alarming me; I am so sure that they are not directed against us. It is in any case a new characteristic which serves to render complete the sketch of contemporary English youth. It is sceptical, politically far advanced and bellicose. Only the first of these characteristics will be altered.

Saturday, June 15, 1895.—Furnished with all the necessary permissions, we have gone in a party into the country. One of our friends entertained us on that plateau which dominates the curving narrow green valley of the Thames from Abingdon to Reading. What a delightful thing is the English country house! With its character of simplicity, displayed by its unpretentious architecture and its endless lawns, with its atmosphere of happiness which is distilled from the creepers, and from the flowers which encircle every window. How is it that, having found not only the true type of

family house, so simple that it does not remind the casual visitor of his poverty, so gay that everyone returns to it with pleasure; having found still more the harmonious name to give it, and the song with which to sing of it—how is it, I ask, that the English have not our family life with its profound bonds of union and its lofty conception of the mother?

After sketching out this question in my thoughts, I was taken to a representation of Alcestes, given in Greek by the boys of Bradfield College. Whether it was the effect of the pronunciation, or of the automatic stiffness of the actors, I know not; but in spite of the learned reconstruction of the music and the chorus, in spite of the conscientious disattire of the actors (British prudery is an article preserved for export only), in spite of the light of a summer's day, I never for a moment had a single theatrical illusion.

To console myself I went to visit Brad-

field College, a typical public school. The college, which is built in the heart of the country, consists of a series of little houses inhabited by the teachers, and flanked by dormitories for the pupils. The whole centres round a little chapel, quite new, and fresh with climbing plants that hide the glare of the new bricks. English children live entirely surrounded with verdure. They have it in their bedroom-windows, in their college lecture-rooms, in the scenery which they always have before their eyes. Meadows, with clusters of trees here and there, run down to the edge of a little stream, over which stand some mounds: further on one sees a plain, where the wind surges at will over the bending grass, as it were on the green waters of the ocean.

How happy the youth whose first years pass away in these nests of verdure, whose last are spent in the palaces of Oxford!

Tuesday, June 18, 1895.—I have already remarked the absence of all literary or artistic curiosity as one of the gravest faults of Oxford. The abuse of strong drink is another. I have once or twice been present at scenes such as those which took place yesterday and about midnight at X—— College. Five or six undergraduates gathered beside a piano, which had been rendered almost inarticulate by the glasses of beer that had been poured over its strings, were singing a German song. On the carpet, in the midst of puddles of beer, reposed fifty-eight bottles arranged in rows of ten. I took the trouble of counting them while the lamp swung to and fro, dimmed by the smoke of the pipes, and while one of the guests was making a hurried exit through a door.

Wednesday, June 19, 1895.—There is at Oxford a class of students who deserve the greatest pity. These are the poor

undergraduates. The necessity of living with companions who squander their money, united with their British pride, causes them much trouble. Some are generously supported by their families, who spend on their behalf all their capital; others make up their mind to contract debts; and many a poor parish priest has to economize in order to pay for the mild extravagances of his Oxford days. Others write in the papers during the winter, and look out for teaching in the summer, for 'pups' as they are called here. What a terrible blot on a University which knows nothing of our system of bursarships,[18] and which gives its scholarships to its most brilliant, and not to its most portionless, pupils!

Thursday, June 20, 1895.—In spite of all the respect I felt, I kept asking myself to-day, when I saw the degrees conferred, whether I was not attending the ceremony in the 'Malade Imaginaire.' The proctors

read in Latin the list of the candidates; then they get up and march rapidly down the room to find out if any objections are made. If there are none, the junior proctor declares the degrees are granted. 'Hæ gratiæ concessæ sunt.' The candidates are then summoned; a member of each college introduces them in Latin as before to the gathering: 'Insignissime Vice-Cancellarie vosque egregii Procuratores.'

The macebearers distribute to the new graduates a number of little Bibles; the Vice-Chancellor gets up and invites them in Latin to swear fidelity to the privileges, customs, and liberties of this University. They answer in chorus, 'Juro.' Each student then advances and kneels before the Vice-Chancellor with bent head. The Vice-Chancellor murmurs a 'Te admitto,' and hits him on the forehead with the Bible. The ceremony is still unfinished. The candidates go away, and then come

back dressed in their new robes, and salute the body before withdrawing. I really believe that the cultivation of these reminders of the Middle Ages has its limits, and that one sometimes runs the risk of becoming ridiculous through excessive respect for them.

Friday, June 21, 1895.—I experienced this evening a great artistic impression. In the garden of Worcester College they had built by the side of the lawn a rustic stage. Two old trees formed with their knotted trunks and foliage the background; two flowery shrubs formed the side-scenes; on the right one could see the shining lake half hidden by some willows; on the left knots of trees on which flickered red or blue lights; add to all this the perfume of the flowers, the silence of the evening, and the blue sky of a summer's night.

What a dream for an artist to perform the comedies of Shakespeare amidst surroundings such as these! As one listened

to the laughter and tears of the heroes of 'As You Like It,' one could believe that the fancies of one's imagination had found a visible form, and were come to sing the eternal song of youth and love. While Miss Dorothea Baird played with all the insight of a woman, the enthusiasm of an admirer of Shakespeare, and the talent of an artist, the exquisite part of Rosalind, a character which is at the same time ideal and true, which belongs alike to England and humanity; while Miss Baird repeated the amorous words of the great poet, who was at the same time tender and vigorous, the water of the lake shone with a mystic light, the breeze gently stirred the leaves, and up above in the sky the stars seemed to tremble with emotion.

Sunday, June 23, 1895.—I did not wish to let the term go by without once listening to a University sermon. At ten o'clock the Vice-Chancellor, accompanied by the

preacher, the Bishop of Hereford, in scarlet robes, preceded by his bedels, and followed by the heads of all the colleges in scarlet gowns and white surplices, took his seat on a Bishop's throne, while the M.A.'s take their places in the pews in the centre of the nave. Immediately after the first Psalm the preacher ascends the pulpit. Tall and aristocratic, the Bishop was more like a pious nobleman than a priest. He commenced by praying for the University, its benefactors, and, as every preacher must do, for his college. In place of taking a theological subject, he developed general ideas on youth. 'We have,' he said, 'great confidence in the new generation; we expect much of them, as much from the literary as from the social point of view; but they will have many obstacles to vanquish, and the faith of a Christian is, perhaps, the only thing which can give them the necessary forces.' While read-

ing his sermon, which was full of eloquence and poetical metaphors, the preacher often turned towards the seats kept for the undergraduates, where they were gathered together, looking like a body of happy young priests. At the end of the sermon a prayer was read, a Psalm sung, and the church silently emptied.

Monday, June 24, 1895.—Lord Rosebery has resigned, and the prospect of a dissolution is the subject of conversation, though it has no effect on Commemoration Week, that new series of festivities which close the term as worthily as Eights' week began it.

The colleges are transformed by the arrival of ladies; at the windows are young girls in white dresses. The quadrangles re-echo with laughter and song, and the scented rooms are strewn with flowers. The afternoons are devoted to excursions on the river, the evenings to balls.

Who could describe all the grace and beauty of these dances in the old halls, followed by the walks in the illuminated gardens? Yesterday evening the gardens of Wadham were like fairyland. Red lamps were hung in the window-frames; the gentle glow of the lanterns, which shone like stars among the trees, lighted up the gardens, and enabled one to make out the white dresses of the ladies walking on the lawns or seated in the bowers—charming shadows which glided about in the night like beloved phantoms. Who can wonder that amidst these beautiful scenes in the gardens, where one heard nothing but the distant music of the violins and the whispered conversations, young people exchanged the 'Yes' which with us is too often said in the presence of the lawyer. Young people who know not our hypocritical conventions, who can find in your maidens friends and lovers, who win your women of their own accord,

continue your walks amidst the shadow of the gardens, continue your converse on the banks of the Isis. You are more happy than we.

Wednesday, June 26, 1895.—To-day is the festival annually given in memory of the benefactors of the University, whence the name of Encænia, or Commemoration Day, is derived. The hall of the Sheldonian presented a unique sight. Above the ground-floor, which was occupied by the black robes of the B.A.'s and M.A.'s, were the red robes of the doctors; higher still could be seen beautiful dresses; and above all, in the amphitheatre and gallery, a swarm of fair, smiling faces, in the midst of which one could sometimes discern the hats of young girls. The sun came in through the high windows, was reflected from the gilding to fall again, like cloth of gold, on the scarlet robes of the doctors. The Vice-Chancellor opened the meeting in a Latin speech, frequently broken with

interruptions, when the undergraduates reproached him with being ignorant of his grammar. The honorary doctors, after making a solemn entry, were presented in turn to the Vice-Chancellor. I remember nothing of all these speeches except a phrase which was applied to Sir H. Loch, the Governor of the Cape—a phrase which no one could find guilty of excessive modesty: 'What people is so ignorant that it does not know the name of our country? what people so ungrateful as not to love it when they know it?'

In the midst of cries of 'Buck up!' and 'Stop!' they reached the recitation of the prizes. The Chancellor's prize for English literature left me indifferent, and I acknowledge that I did not fully appreciate the iambics of L. Morrison. The audience brightened up at the lines of J. S. Arkwright, who had won the Newdigate prize. The undergraduates had ceased their cries, and the fine verses, read in a slow and sad

voice, resounded in the silent room. I went out before the end of the ceremony, quite sad at the thought that the term was coming to a close, and that Oxford, perhaps, would soon be deserted.

By way of distraction, I was invited to one of the last garden-parties. Someone wished to introduce me to a countryman of mine. I accepted the invitation with enthusiasm. I was just going to speak, when my new friend began: 'I hope that you admire, that you speak, English?' 'But——' 'How grand this is! how beautiful! What a country! one can only bow down before it. Here, at any rate, they know how to make men. Doubtless you play at tennis, golf?' 'But——' 'Upon my word, their ignorance is perfectly delightful!' 'How long have you been at Oxford?' I asked. 'Since yesterday at mid-day.' This conversation soon drove away all the joy I had felt in hearing my native tongue again.

PART III.

Friday, July 5, 1895.—Here I am back at Oxford, which is silent, but by no means deserted. The elections have prevented many of the professors from going away; besides, Balliol keeps its gates open for a month more. I shall thus be able to be present at the elections without any fear of solitude. Political excitement is visible everywhere — in the conversation of the undergraduates, who have given up everything—work and sport—to talk about the one topic of the elections; in the appearance of the streets, which are decked with caricatures; in the public meetings, which are unlike ours, owing to the large pro-

portion of ladies present, and to the public distrust for vague and sonorous generalities.

Friday, July 12, 1895.—Yesterday all the women of the town received a circular sent out by the Society for the Emancipation of Women. This circular, after a summary of women's rights, such as equality in rights and in duties in all that affects the interests of the community and the State, equality in intellectual development, equality in work, and the free choice of a career, invited women 'to use all their influence' (the words in italics) to secure the election of a friend of women's rights. In case the candidate and the elector (presumably the husband), should prove difficult to convince, the secretary of the society reminded her readers of the fresh arguments in favour of female franchise. Women are entitled in the same way as men to life, to liberty, and to happiness;

if the mother enjoys a greater freedom, she will bring up her child better, etc. The circular had its effect; the candidates were questioned, and as the Conservative candidate, Lord Valentia, declared himself to be in favour of female franchise, it will increase his chances of success. They were already numerous. The passions stirred by the Home Rule question are still alive; the shortsighted and unmethodical politics of Lord Rosebery have created a profound hostility; lastly, the custom of giving each party in turn a majority has become a characteristic of the English people.

Saturday, July 13, 1895.—The University proceeded this morning to elect two Members of Parliament. The Vice-Chancellor, after having opened Convocation in Latin, read the writ, which ordered him to proceed to an election. Then, in another Latin speech, he affirmed that no one had tried to corrupt him, either by

promises of gold, or any other promises; as a guarantee of this, he signed another document. Two doctors then introduced in Latin the two retiring members as candidates for the votes of the body; and they were elected without opposition burgesses of the University. The election to the County of Oxford bears no resemblance to this. What a strange city is this Oxford, wherein one is continually going from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, and *vice versâ !*

Sunday, July 14, 1895.—Political excitement finds several methods of expression, some of them not lacking in originality. Young and pretty girls dress themselves from head to foot in their party colours—blue or red. Street-boys parade the town shouting songs; these singers must be acting of their own accord, otherwise the candidates might be accused of corruption. Electors send into the streets dogs decorated with blue or red ribbons, to the

immense delight of the spectators—a delight scarcely shared by these poor beasts, who receive not a few blows in exchange for their political convictions.

Monday, July 15, 1895. The canvassers have gone out. Mrs. ——, an ardent Conservative, has given me permission to accompany her through the suburbs, with the title of secretary. The first street we visited was almost entirely composed of lodgings for undergraduates; it goes without saying that all the lodgings are Conservative. The second street was poorer in appearance, and inhabited by Radical workpeople. They took us at first for tax-gatherers; then, when the object of our visit was explained, their faces brightened; workmen and the middle class were equally delighted to find the candidate troubling his friends in order to ask their votes. The conversation began: 'Will the contest be a close one?' 'When will the next meeting take place?'

And we left the house after slipping into their hands the ordinary Conservative card: 'Lord Valentia asks you to do him the honour of voting for him.'

How serious and dignified is this electoral strife! How worthy of a free people! How fortunate is this political excitement, which brings all classes together here in the same eagerness and devotion to the beloved cause! How gladly would one return to the countries where the tavern is the headquarters of the political and social machinery!

Wednesday, July 17, 1895.—To-day the election is held. In the evening the peaceable streets of Oxford wore an aspect I had never seen. In St. Giles's a gathering of the faithful were singing songs in unison with the pealing bells. The spot was almost deserted. All at once, from a neighbouring street, comes a band of women dressed in ribbons, marching with a red flag. Seeing the little group of

worshippers, they surround it, and drown with their cries the sound of the Psalms. When the band of women had disappeared, the faithful residue were so few that they dispersed in silence. Almost at the same time the bells ceased to ring. We got closer to the crowd, which was very tightly packed—a motley collection of urchins, women, and men; every moment they were jostled by a Liberal or Conservative crowd, always led by women. Sometimes two bodies crossed each other and hissed; then two electors would come to blows; the women formed a circle; the spectators would separate them, and the whole thing would end in a general scrimmage. Then the police would establish order by an impartial shower of blows. All the while the crowd would be as thick as ever. Here some women would attack some men, and snatch their colours from them. The men would gallantly reply with blows of the fist; in another spot

three Conservative undergraduates forced a path through a group of scowling faces; further on a drunken man and woman fell head first into a ditch, while no one paid them any attention. Above this crowd floated a black cloud, and the electric light cast a greenish tint on their faces. I came back disgusted. It was the first time I had mingled in an English crowd, and I had formed but an imperfect idea of its brutality. We learnt an hour afterwards that Lord Valentia had been elected, but we had not the courage to go once again and brave the crowd in order to see the member and his wife pass in a carriage drawn by the delighted electors through the crowded streets.

Thursday, July 18, 1895.—The cold rain comes down in torrents, lays the dust, and destroys the posters on the walls. My friends resumed their work in the morning; in the afternoon their sports. The crowd has become calm and cool. Elec-

tion days are evidently occasions of carnival.

Saturday, July 20, 1895.—This morning we still talk about politics as we read the papers. From time to time I attempt to direct my friends from the subject, which, when uninterrupted, becomes tiresome. It was on an occasion of this kind that they explained one day to me their idea of women. They never think that the mother, the sister, and, later on, the beloved wife, are called upon to exercise a deep and mysterious influence on their lives. The family has little effect on the formation of character, and in the family the mother has less influence than anybody. During their childhood they consider a girl as a companion who reads the same books, receives the same education, and plays the same games—a companion to whom they pay little attention, and one who feels some contempt for them. They do not change

when they grow up. They love less than they are loved. They see in marriage an association of two beings who are perfectly equal, have the same rights to exercise and the same duties to fulfil. The education of children ought not to occupy the entire attention of the mother. They think it natural that women should have their own societies, their own papers, in short, their own ideas. Soon they will have the franchise; and it will only be the logical consequence of a peculiar view of womankind—a view which refuses her a sufficiently important part in the family and in society to occupy her whole activity; and has provided the two sexes with equal arms to fulfil the same tasks and to attain the same ends. The crowd of lady students who submerge the males, the host of female journalists and of female authors are due to this idea. To-morrow the same view will give birth to an army of female doctors and female politicians.

But at such an epoch where will be the maidens and their mothers? My friends never gave me an answer. With such a conception of women, the family loses its ties, society its charm, and life its poetry.

Sunday, July 21, 1895.—A kind friend has shown me several numbers of the lady students' journal, in order to complete my enlightenment as to their state of mind. They have given it the harmonious title of the *Fritillary*.[19] It is very curious to compare the journal with the undergraduates' paper, the *Isis*. If one forgets for a moment that the ladies' review is superior from a literary point of view, it is impossible to discover the least difference between the two papers. The subjects of the articles are the same. Athletic news occupies as important a place in the *Fritillary* as in the *Isis*. Here is an announcement of a match with Cambridge, which will take place at Wimbledon on May 15. The Oxford

team will consist of the Hockey Clubs of Somerville Hall and Lady Margaret Hall. Miss B. H—— will be the captain. I learn later that their debating society has discussed the following questions: 'Is Ibsen's teaching peculiarly suited to our epoch?' 'Is the Poor Law a disgrace to a civilized nation?' In the Mathematical Club two papers have been read on the application of mathematics to physics and on mathematics in Egyptian architecture. Further on the well-known work of Benjamin Kidd on Social Evolution, and the socialist pamphlets of R. Blatchford, were clearly and sympathetically analyzed. Lastly, the University settlements and the visits of the workmen to Oxford are also mentioned in this ladies' paper. In the *Fritillary*, as in the *Isis*, the same clubs, the same sports, and the same books occupied the same space. While turning over the leaves of the ladies' paper, I only found two things which I should have

looked for in vain in the *Isis*. The one would have caused me uneasiness had not the other reassured me. The first was a poem entitled 'Visionary Verses':

'Close to my heart my little children lie—
My little ones who never shall be born,
They shall not know how hard it is to die,
And they shall ne'er be left of men forlorn.
They shall not rise and greet the bitter morn
With eyes that sadden at futurity.

'For they beside the margin of Time's river
Shall scatter not their precious seed in vain;
They shall not sing to scoffers, they shall never
Lay bare their anguish to the world's disdain.
Nay, better hushed to sleep and stilled for ever
By her who first conceived them, they remain.'

These sad and melancholy verses, and some other very unfeminine articles, would have caused me some alarm had I not in the same number found in a different place the heading 'Marriages.'

Wednesday, July 24, 1895.—I have been having long talks for nearly three months

with Oxford men, and yet it appears to me almost impossible to say what English or foreign writers have exercised a decided influence on their minds. The generations of undergraduates from 1860 to 1865, and from 1875 to 1880, had been impregnated by the ideas of Carlyle and Ruskin. As to the youth of the present day who are Freethinkers and Radicals in a vague way, it appears difficult to me to specify precisely the influences which have formed their ideas. They appreciate French literature better than their forefathers, but it is a literary curiosity rather than an enthusiastic admiration. Tolstoi and Ibsen are not read except by a few exceptionally cultured, and their influence cannot be compared with that which they exercise in France. Their favourite poets are Tennyson and Swinburne; their favourite novelists Thackeray or Kipling. But none of these authors can be numbered among those pre-eminent men of genius who shape a

whole generation. The man who was readily accepted as a master at Balliol was Herbert Spencer; but I do not think that his influence can be compared to that exercised in former days by Carlyle and Ruskin.

The new generation at Oxford is very like ours in the preponderance it gives in its work and interests to social questions. It resembles it too in the individual character of its intellect. In its youth, just as in its annual picture exhibitions, one can with much trouble discern certain general tendencies; but one does not find the marked schools of thought that were so conspicuous in former times. It is a difficulty which the critics of the present and the future have to encounter; it is an advantage in the free-play it affords to character.

Thursday, July 25, 1895.—I have already explained in passing how an exclusively moral and political education is given to

the youth of Oxford. I acknowledge it; but the moral sense and political obligation are the two foundations of a free society. It was easy to recognise from the first how tradition, environment and corporate life formed the three principal instruments of the educational system. I have waited till the end of my stay to judge of the value of the last, an institution peculiar to Oxford, and a subject of considerable pride—the tutorial system. The pupils of a college are entrusted in groups of four and five to a master, whose duty it is to talk with them, to give them advice, and to correct their work. The idea is ingenious, and under two conditions might lead to excellent results; first, the undergraduates must be naturally ready to accept influence and advice; secondly, the masters must have a genius for training. I know my friends well enough to affirm that the first condition is, with very few exceptions, incapable of

realization. On the other hand, does not the absence of system show that a knowledge of training could not exist at Oxford? Supervision is incompatible with the peculiar independence of the English temperament.

One asks one's self the same question in relation to the University of Oxford as one has already asked in relation to the English family: Whence do the English obtain their robust education? In the University the masters seldom have a direct personal influence. In the family domestic ties have no effect on the mind. Education is, I believe, imparted almost entirely by the force of environment and by the examples which are continually before one's eyes.

August 2, 1895.—The long vacation term at Balliol has just ended. My friends are scattered; some are off to the Continent; others are going to explore the picturesque corners of England;

others to visit the fine English cities. I belong to the last group, as I am anxious to become acquainted with some of the social institutions which are dearest to Oxford undergraduates.

London, August 4, 1895—*Toynbee Hall.* —I went on foot from High Holborn to Whitechapel. Instead of the narrow, wealthy streets of the City, I found broad avenues or blind alleys, with monotonous lines of small houses, among which the public-houses add a touch of red to the scene. Around these same public-houses swarm an ignoble crowd of sickly children and ugly hags. Open one of the doors, and you see a sight which will never be effaced from your memory. In a fetid atmosphere are crowded together a herd of men and women; here a young woman weeps, leaning against the wall, a prey to the first hiccoughing stage of drunkenness; there two urchins are rolling on the floor; in the middle of a crowd two old women,

toothless, shoeless, and ragged, are abusing each other. The careless crowd pass on in the middle of a storm of rain, which covers the streets with black mud, the sky with a black veil. It is misery such as this that the English undergraduates have been attacking since 1885.

Toynbee Hall, in its greenness at any rate, resembles one of the Oxford ladies' colleges. There is the same group of brick buildings, the same servants in caps and aprons. The secretary, a graduate, receives me, as only Oxford men know how to receive, and soon conducts me to join the residents in the dining-room, young men who are working at Toynbee Hall. While one of the members was looking over the accounts of the volunteer battalion which he was going to take into the country, the others were explaining to me the four principles on which Toynbee Hall rests. Toynbee Hall is a branch of Oxford, a University college in which the

students come and give in exchange for their board a certain number of lectures. Toynbee Hall has no political or sectarian characters. The students did not wish to establish a mere charity. The workmen join in the expense of the organization of the various societies, by means of which they gathert he workmen around them—volunteer corps, athletic clubs, dramatic, literary, and political societies. Finally, in order to create an atmosphere of work and of intellectual culture, they have drawn to themselves the shopkeepers and teachers in order to mix them with the workers, and thus to stimulate their curiosity or their self-esteem.

After having explained to me at length the principles and the general objects of the work, that of making the workmen acquainted with the intellectual and artistic joys which have been reserved for the lucky ones of the world, Mr. A—— took me over the buildings. He showed me

first the large hall, where every year a free public exhibition of pictures is held. This exhibition is visited by nearly 80,000 people. So much for the artistic side. Further on is a large meeting hall, where is a smoking-room, provided with papers; a library of 10,000 volumes, given by their publishers. So much for the intellectual side. While Mr. A—— was explaining the respective duties of the warden, the general manager, the secretary, who is appointed by the committee of the University missions, and of the residents, who are selected by the secretary, I thought of other countries which have not yet entertained the idea of bringing together that other youth which is termed 'the people,' to make them forget some part of their sufferings, while one speaks to them of truth and beauty, and to receive in exchange the salutary lessons which may be derived from human misfortunes.

Manchester, August 28, 1895—*The Ancoats Brotherhood.* — The Ancoats Brotherhood is a society of workpeople which provides its members with beds in the hospitals, hires a hall wherein literary and political meetings may be held, and organizes excursions and balls. This society is in constant communication with bodies of students, who provide it with speakers and pecuniary assistance.

After wandering about in the suburbs, the sadness and poverty of which I could never describe, we nearly had to abandon our hopes of visiting the brotherhood. The settlement was shut, and the president absent. An innkeeper fortunately pointed out to us the house of the secretary, who was a mechanic. Mr. ——, who had an intelligent but hard face, took us into his little house, and offered us tea, with the help of his wife, an old workwoman as active as he was thin and weakly. Conversation commenced, and it proved

so interesting that I do not hesitate to give a short outline of what was said.

Our host began by explaining to us the idea of the Ancoats Brotherhood. He gave us one of the cards which were used to advertise it. On a wretched bed are stretched a workman, his wife and children. Through the half-open window one sees a melancholy vista of English suburbs, a mass of chimneys smoking in the rain; the workman and his wife seem to look towards heaven; a radiant angel appears to them; he holds in one hand a heart which lightens the world, and in the other a scroll, on which I read: 'In future, society will have for its motto, "Work for all; Hope for all; Art for all."' On the other side was engraved the device of the brotherhood, 'Life without work is a crime; work without art is desecration.' We afterwards talked about the elections. Mr. —— explained the victory of the Conservatives at Manchester in many ways. If the Liberals

had put the Local Veto Bill in the forefront of their programme, they would have gained the support of the Temperance party, which is very strong in certain English districts. In the quarter where our host lived none of the public-houses do any business. Lastly, the Irish party and the Catholic party have a great influence at Manchester. 'The Catholic priest,' he exclaimed, 'lives in the midst of his parishioners, is busied with their family affairs, while the English clergymen marry, and many of them marry their wives for their fortunes. The Catholics pray for the dead, and keep memory alive; the Anglican Church buries them and forgets them; she thus alienates the people, who cling more strongly than the rich to commemoration of the dead.'

'And then?' I said.

'I understand what you mean,' said Mr. ——: 'the members lost by the

Anglican Church do not join the Catholic. They join the army of unbelievers, or the Salvation Army, whose music distracts the inhabitants of the slums, who are weary of the monotony of their streets, of their life, and their climate.'

Our host left the field of theology and told us of the attachment which bound him and his friends to Oxford men. The speakers who have been sent this year to the Ancoats Brotherhood have had a great success. I asked what authors are most in demand at the libraries. He replied Tennyson and George Eliot. Besides private reading, the society is reading aloud this year a volume of Ruskin, Manzini, and the 'Imitation.' I was very anxious to induce him to speak on the subject of foreign politics. He acceded readily enough. After explaining to me his violent antipathy for Russia, he told me that English workpeople regarded war as a crime. 'Although we laugh at

France,' he added, 'yet all the while we like her. She is a Republic, a country of sun and gaiety, and,' he added, 'you know how to enjoy yourselves. Everyone who has been to France has come back delighted with the nation and its capital. Paris,' he said in conclusion, 'has a magical fascination for us; it is impossible to know your country without loving it.'

Oxford, September 1, 1895.—To-day is the last I spend at Oxford, and I devote it to pilgrimages of gratitude.

Yesterday I took advantage of a mild evening to wander through the winding streets which separate the principal colleges. I followed the course of New College Lane. All at once, as I passed an old doorway, I saw the two towers and the thousand pinnacles of All Souls' rising behind a wall. One after another they rose into the sky, and their light spires stood out clear against the blue depths. In the trembling light of evening, to the sound

of hymns in the chapel below, the towers seemed to dance a fantastic measure; they grew smaller, grew larger, and suddenly, at the turn of the street, they disappeared as it were by enchantment. Further on were the crenellated walls of Merton and Oriel. There was not a sound to be heard, only the echo of my steps in the lonely streets. The walls seemed to start out of their slumbers as they heard them. I walked all the while as it were in a dream. I seemed to see the Middle Ages, with their colleges and their clerks, reappear beneath my astonished eyes, the whole of that troubled epoch which gave birth to modern times. At the turn of a street I saw shops and jets of gas; the dream had faded away.

This evening I went to look a last time from the height of Abingdon Hill on the little valley where I had thought but little, felt much, and learned still more. At my feet, among the river's tangling curves,

stretched Oxford, at once melancholy and gay. The domes and towers rose in a single mass. The suburbs formed as it were a frame of red roofs around them, and the blue smoke looked like some mysterious halo. The meadows and the wooded hills girt it about with a double girdle, the first brilliant, the second sombre, and far away on the horizon those blue hills which Turner knew so well how to paint.

These two little pictures embodied two of the greatest influences of Oxford. The first arises from its palaces, so rich in beauty and examples to imitate; the other from its nearness to the moral and healthy life of the fields.

Can I say that I owe all that I learnt at Oxford solely to these two influences, of which the first penetrates one almost unconsciously as one opens one's eyes or breathes? No; I learnt other lessons, the memory of which I shall retain, but in silence.

CONCLUSION: TWO YEARS AFTERWARDS.

August 27, 1897 — At Sea. — We leave Dover, and are lost in the fog. One can see still, in spite of the mists, the sharp outline of the high cliffs through which the sea has come and cut out the port of Dover, a magnificent point of arrival worthy of a great people. Everything is blotted out; there is a gentle swell. My ideas of Oxford pass to and fro in my mind; they have now taken an exact and definite shape. In spite of my admiration and my gratitude, I am compelled to recognise that Oxford has some serious failings in the organization as well as in

the character of its youth; in its teaching, the absence of any idea of training and the suppression of literary education; in its professors, the absence of clearness alike in substance and in style, together with the small number of really eminent men; in the students, the idleness, the absence with a few exceptions of literary and artistic interests, and of serious historical knowledge. Here are certainly a good many faults. And yet these failings are easily forgotten in the two great qualities Oxford possesses—the existence of a political and ethical education. Moral dignity—this is the word one always has on one's lips when one speaks of Oxford, of its palaces, its traditions, its ceremonies, the daily life of its students. This is the highest tribute of praise that can be given, the tribute that is least often deserved. This judgment which an impartial stranger should (in my opinion at least) pass on Oxford may be extended to

England. When we look at her from the other side of the Channel we marvel at her wealth and her powers of expansion; but as soon as one reaches Dover, as soon as one goes into the interior of this great fortress, one discovers some breaches in the walls the gravity of which one would only partially have suspected. The pauperism of the manufacturing towns, the agricultural distress, complicated as it is by the disappearance of the small landowner, give a particularly grave character to social problems. The difficulties in the way of imperial federation, the persistence of the Scotch and Irish type, unassimilated by centuries of intercourse, are very striking to the Frenchman. The system of teaching and domestic life in England would also offer subjects of astonishment to an open-minded and enthusiastic admirer. These failings (the list is far from being complete) do not diminish the incomparable

greatness of England or her faith in her future.

Her certain and self-confident vigour is not explained by any fundamental superiority of the Anglo-Saxon races. When one speaks of the three or four nations which direct the evolution of Western civilization, there is no country which is superior to any other *a priori*.

Every race and every individual have their natural good and bad qualities; it is their part by virtue of their sense of unity, their vigour and their natural energy, to develop the gifts and correct the vices of their birth. England is the best example of the voluntary and conscious development of a people. Her actual superiority (this is only, I repeat, a personal opinion) rests upon those qualities which have done most to give birth to liberty and activity—I mean moral qualities.

I must be more precise. I do not mean to say that the French people are morally

inferior to the English. Even in this department we have qualities our rivals lack; we have more generosity, more sincerity, more gentleness—I do not say more kindliness. I do not even mean to say that the moral level of the mass of the nation, workmen and peasants, is much below that of the population of England. This would be quite inaccurate. No; the superiority of the English morality is only true of the best men in intellectual and political life. But this élite, whether consciously or not, leads and moulds the nation. The governing classes of England have a more elevated idea of marriage, of society, and of life, than the governing classes of this country.

When the pick of a nation is of opinion that the young ought to decide for themselves as to a union on which a life of mutual affection and fidelity will be based; when the pick proclaims that all the members of a society are bound together by a

double duty, political and social; when this aristocracy, prompted at the same time by its contempt for the subtleties of the analytical spirit which is a fault, and by its pronounced religious education, which is a virtue, condemns scepticism and thinks that everyone ought to have a faith to enlighten him, and an end to attain, then such a nation can congratulate itself on its success. They are the rewards of its slow but steady advance towards moral ideals.

On the day when the governing classes of France shall think fit to imbibe the example that the flower of England affords them, to consider, as they do, that marriage is not a treaty of commerce, but a tie which imposes equivalent duties; to distrust, as they do, the man who thinks it a fine thing to take no part in political strife, and who thinks he has done his whole duty as a member of society when he has helped a beggar; to remind their children,

as they do, that there is something else to do in life than to make conquests among women and to hunt for places in the Government, on such a day the evil influences of the period from 1850 to 1865 will have spent themselves, and the great problems which cause us anxiety, problems that are entirely concerned with morality, will be solved.

Will the brave warfare that a little band of distinguished men is waging against the ideas and the customs of our age ever end in success? Will the tendencies that may be seen in the younger generation, in the serious life of the best among them, the interest that is taken in Colonial matters, the attempts that are made to establish social institutions for the working classes, be upheld and encouraged? Shall we see the dawn of a new epoch? Will the young men of to-day (to use Ruskin's expression) be sons of the

morning, the children of the dawn to come?

I raised my eyes; the fog had scattered, and a brilliant sun was shedding its light on the French coast.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In the foregoing translation the verbal mistakes that occur in the original have been corrected. No attempt has been made to correct such errors of opinion as may be found in the book. One or two passages which might cause pain have been omitted, and one or two which might give rise to misconception among strangers to Oxford have been modified in the text or corrected in the notes. The author's footnotes, which explain matters familiar to an English reader, have been omitted. A few notes dealing with French institutions referred to in the text have been added from materials supplied by the author. All alterations have been made with the author's permission.

W. R. B.

December 31, 1898.

NOTES

1. The two upper classes in a lycée are called the 'Rhetoric' and the 'Philosophy.' The pupil has to pass an examination on going through each of these, and as soon as he leaves them to join the University he becomes a Bachelor.

2. The nearest English equivalent to the French lycée is the public school. But the lycée bears a far closer resemblance to the German gymnasia.

3. The Conférence Molé is a debating society, consisting of young barristers of the Paris Bar. It discusses political and social questions. It was founded in 1855, and many great French statesmen (among others, Gambetta, Ribot, Barthou, and the author's own father, the late M. Bardoux) have been presidents of it.

4. Lycées devoted to ladies, which are notorious for the bad taste with which they are conducted.

5. This is an allusion to Mr. Podsnap's 'Young Person' in 'Our Mutual Friend.'

6. Bullier is the best known music-hall in the Quartier Latin. It was especially popular from 1840 to 1860. It is a favourite resort of the 'distinguished stranger.'

7. It is scarcely accurate to call 'congregation' the upper house of the University. For details as to